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The Many Studies About the United States

Apparatus End the Same Way: Reform



The Solution Is To Try Centralizing

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ASHINGTON—When Senate and House Committees completed their investigations of the operations of the intelligence community last year, several conclusions stood out:

- The intelligence agencies had been allowed to operate without sufficient direction, either by the President or by Congress.

- Their structure and their secrecy made it nearly impossible to trace responsibility for abuses. As one weary member of the Senate Intelligence Committee put it in 1975: "It was like the old joke. 'Nobody was driving. We were all in the back seat.'"

- The \$5 billion—until recently, \$6 billion—intelligence apparatus was cumbersome, "redundant" (in Governmentese, that means it has enormous duplication of effort) and often didn't collect the information the President needed to know when he needed to know it.

Last Thursday President Carter took an important step toward dealing with some of these questions: He centralized more administrative power under the director of Central Intelligence than that official has possessed since the agency was set up in 1947.

In Washington, centralization of power is no panacea for abuse. Indeed, the history of the intelligence community over the last three decades suggests that it was at its worst when it had its greatest power. It was, for instance, part of the sad chapter of the Chilean affair—the United States involvement in the downfall of President Salvador Allende Gossens—that a former director, Richard Helms, left President Nixon's office feeling he had "a marshal's baton under his arm."

But in President Carter's move there is also centralization of responsibility. Now, presumably, the President can ring up Adm. Stansfield Turner, his director of Central Intelligence, ask "What's this I hear" about an intelligence matter and be talking to the man responsible. By the same token, the two Congressional oversight committees should be able to get their answers and issue their advice through Admiral Turner.

Members of the Senate Intelligence Committee and Admiral Turner both had contemplated an intelligence reorgan-

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